# Myth and Ideology in 'Traditional' French Canada: Dollard, the Martyred Warrior

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RÉSUMÉ

Deux problèmes majeurs sous-tendent l'analyse de l'idéologie messianique et conservatrice qui a tant marqué l'histoire du Canada français d'avant les années de la Révolution Tranquille. Il s'agit en premier lieu d'une question d'ordre synchronique, soit la complexité des pratiques dites «superstructurales»: la plupart des études s'en sont tenues à la description générale du contenu et thèmes de cette idéologie, de même qu'à l'analyse de ses multiples causes et conséquences, mais sans jamais se donner comme objectif celui de reconstruire ce symbolisme 'traditionaliste' dans toute sa *complexité structurale*. Puis il y a, en deuxième lieu, une question d'ordre diachronique, soit ce prétendu fossé qui aurait isolé, selon la plupart des auteurs, les valeurs traditionalistes du Canada français des valeurs dominantes de la Société Moderne.

Cet article traite des deux problèmes ci-dessus mentionnés, et ce à la lumière d'une légende fort connue, celle de Dollard Des Ormeaux, laquelle parvint à condenser et à transmettre les principaux messages du symbolisme messianique de cette époque.

Two fundamental problems pervade the social scientific literature pertaining to those 'conservative' ideologies and symbols which have marked French Canadian Society from the 1840's until the 1950's. The first one is synchronic: it concerns the nature of meaning itself and its relationship to concrete practices. My contention is that studies of traditional values in French Canada have too often concerned themselves with the general description, history, causes, effects and functions of such values, without paying much attention

to the systemic complexity of their subject matter and to the structural properties of symbolic phenomena. This paper provides an illustrative application of structural anthropology (Lévi-Strauss, 1958) to the analysis of French Canada's traditional symbolism: more specifically, I wish to offer an in-depth study of a well-known legend, that of Dollard Des Ormeaux, and of its success in codifying and transmitting, in a highly condensed fashion, most of the central messages of the dominant ideology of 'survival'.

The second problem is diachronic: it relates to the frequent misuse of anthropology's evolutionary discourse, and to the so-called preservation of non-modern schemes of conduct in traditional French Canada. Many observers[1] have thus argued that the political, economic and social progress of French Canada has been severely retarded by this Society's quasi-feudal ethics or folk culture and its cultural commitment to values other than democratic liberalism, internationalism, science and the growth of material wealth[2]. Others[3], and especially neo-marxist and dependency theorists, have consistently rejected the latter views, but without questioning the 'retrograde' nature of French Canada's conservative value-orientation: their own position is that the 'superstructural backwardness' of French Canada was functionally articulated to the maintenance and reproduction of colonial or capitalist relations of domination and subjugation, and therefore functional to the development of English Canadian and American Capitalism.

The two preceding modes of analysis, which are by no means monolithic, seem to convey what could be regarded as radically different conceptions of the Society under study. Yet an implicit consensus is established around the non-modern, non-capitalistic nature of those traditional values and beliefs (Catholic messianism, anti-liberalism, agriculturalism, political autonomism) which dominated the French Canadian scene for more than a century. It is this unquestioned assumption which I wish to reevaluate in what follows,

[1] E.g., Clark, 1947; Dumont, 1971: 9; Hughes, 1963; Langlois, 1960; Miner, 1963; Moreux, 1969: 48, 51-2, 54; Porter, 1965: 92, 98-9; Redfield, 1964; Trudeau, 1969: 33.

[2] See also Ryan, 1965: 381.

[3] E.g., Bergeron, 1974: 43; Brunet, 1964: 113-67; Dion, 1976: 16, 122-3; Memmi, 1972: 145; Monière, 1977: 32, 158, 290; Rioux, 1971: 57-8; Rocher, 1973: 40-5; Vallières, 1972: 4-5.

in light of the much debated role which Catholicism played in the cultural history of French Canada. The analysis of a mythological expression of this 'retrograde' outlook will enable us to question some of the established views, and to replace the conservative themes into their proper Cultural Context: that is, as a possible variation in the conceptual articulation of Christian asceticism and the ethics of worldly achievements in Western Societies.

Briefly, French Canada's Catholic and messianic version of the Christian ethos did not reject those activities directed to rational achievements in the World, nor did it simply tolerate or remain morally indifferent to organized life-work. Rather, French Canada's messianic Catholicism provided, through the promotion of methodical acts of Charity, a positive incentive to the systematic acquisition of worldly values (knowledge, authority, wealth), and the legitimization of power in all spheres of social life; to which it added, quite paradoxically, an equally positive valuation of ritual sacrifices and of worldly deprivation as a glorification of the sort of asceticism and powerlessness experienced among the petty-bourgeoisie and the propertyless classes of French Canada.

## 1. THE STORY OF A MYTH AND THE MYTH OF HISTORY

One could argue, as Vachon did in the sixties (1966: 268), that the Long Sault battle of 1660 would have attracted very little attention from intellectuals and the public, had it not been for the intrusion of ideological considerations, those which have marked the era of French Canadian conservatism which extended from the end of the first half of the 19th century until the Quiet Revolution of the 1960's. In fact, the history of the legend of Dollard, the hero of this episode in the Iroquois wars, coincides quite closely with the evolution of the latter ideological outlook. Prior to the 1860's, historians barely mentioned the Long Sault battle; Faillon (1865) and Ferland (1882) were the first to give a detailed and grandiloquent account of the event, on the basis of various 17th century documents (cf. Vachon, 1966). Dollard and his men are presented in this religiously-inspired thesis as patriotic and saintly heroes who willingly sacrificed their lives to save their religion and nation against the threat of a massive Iroquois invasion.

Serious objections to the latter thesis were eventually brought forth by William Kingsford and Gustave Lanctot, and then by E. R.

Adair who claimed, in 1932, that Dollard was an ambitious young man who was unaware of the imminence of an Iroquois attack and who did more harm than good in that he aggravated the warlike mood of the Iroquois. The traditional thesis was immediately rescued by various historians, followed by Lionel Groulx who published in *Le Devoir* what was to become the bible of the partisans of the traditional interpretation: i.e., 'Le dossier de Dollard'.

The legend of Dollard retained much of its strength throughout the years and was made an integral part of the historical teachings at all levels of Quebec's educational institutions; his memory is also honoured each year on the 24th of May, in lieu of the Queen Victoria celebrations. However, the Quiet Revolution and its fundamental revision of dominant values have led to the 'demystification' and 'more realistic' assessment of Dollard's exploits. Highschool textbooks are now explicitly committed to the following views: Dollard and his men set out from Ville-Marie in order to wage petty warfare against the Iroquois and to capture their valuable stocks of furs; they did not know that the Iroquois were assembling for a massive invasion of New France; and they saved the colony only temporarily and by chance. (Lacoursière, 1970: 72-4)

Most present-day observers view the 'modern' thesis as more objective or closer to Historical Reality. Yet this rewritten history, much like the older one, does not escape 'the common obligation of all knowledge, to employ a code to analyse its object' (Lévi-Strauss, 1966: 257-8; see also 1962: 340; and 1967: 27). The recent rewritting of the Long Sault massacre signified not the triumph of Fact over Fiction, but rather, as we shall see later, the substitution of one set of cultural codes by an alternative tradition: that of 'Liberal Progress'. But let us first examine the older Tradition as expressed through legend and ideology.

## 2. A STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS

In 1919, Lionel Groulx delivered an address at the Monument National which was later published in *Dix Ans d'Action Française* (1926), under the title of 'Si Dollard Revenait...'. The topic was the 'beautiful tale of heroic youth' which follows.

## *'If Dollard Were Alive Today'*

For over twenty years a savage terror has paralysed New France. The foremost power in Europe allows itself to be insulted and held in check by a handful of Indians. Tribe after tribe the Huron nation, ally to the French, has been destroyed by these barbarians; they have murdered fur-traders, blocked trade routes, martyred missionaries: and still France has not moved. They have even pursued the fugitive Hurons as far as the Ile d'Orléans and, in defiance of the Fort's cannons, paraded their human trophies right in front of Québec. Surreptitiously their small bands spread throughout the colony's lands: women and children are kidnapped, men are scalped in their fields or taken away to a fiery death in distant villages. And still France does not move.

In vain the colony appeals for help in its distress. A series of over ten embassies produces no result. In 1642 and later in 1644, Richelieu and the Queen Regent condescend to send forty, then sixty soldiers.

We are now in the year 1659. Emboldened by the weakness of a colony that seems unable to defend itself, the Iroquois nation has resolved on a final attack. In the spring of 1660 an army of twelve hundred warriors is to assemble at la Roche-Fendue, near Ville-Marie, move quickly from there to destroy the post at Québec, and then fall back upon Trois-Rivières and Ville-Marie.

The colony, when it hears the news, is gripped by panic. In Québec the Blessed Sacrament is exposed and processions are organized. On May 19 Mgr de Laval has the Eucharistic species removed from the parish church and monastery chapels. On the bishop's orders Ursulines and Nursing Sisters evacuate their convents to take refuge in the stronger Jesuit House. Terrified settlers arrive from the surrounding region and from as far afield as Ste-Anne-de-Beaupré to seek refuge with the Jesuits or within the Fort. In the terror-stricken little town, sentries patrol endlessly back and forth, and the nights are filled with their solemn challenge: 'Who goes there?'

No longer does any doubt seem possible. For the majority this is the end of New France. The bravest are exhausted, can no longer bear the horrible nightmare. They talk of sending for French ships to take all the settlers home. Others wonder in anguish whether there will be any survivors to carry the sad news to the Old Country. Only a small group of confident men still believe, in spite

of everything, in the future of the colony and look to heaven for a saviour to appear.

The saviour appeared.

He was twenty-five years old. He was the commanding officer of the garrison at Fort Ville-Marie. A precorious hero, marked earlier for greatness. Having arrived in Canada at the age of twenty-two in 1657 it seems, he had taken post at Ville-Marie, the colony's western outpost and most dangerous point. And there, at the Fort, he acquired the confidence of his superior, a hero and saint called Chomedey de Maisonneuve, and the intimate friendship of another such man, called Lambert Closse.

In the mystic and military colony of Mont-Royal, the exaltation of generosity spread contagiously. Of those men, who prayed while clearing the land with their muskets always within reach, who took communion every day, and who volunteered their services as soldiers of the Virgin in constant expectation of death, not one was beneath heroism. One day, when one of them was reproached for exposing himself too much, Major Closse (for it was he) replied in his characteristic, impatient way: 'Sirs: the only reason I have come here is to die for God, in the service of arms; and were I to be assured that I should not die for Him, I should leave this country and serve against the Turks, so as not to be deprived of that glory.'

In this atmosphere Dollard lived for three years, and within him there occurred a mysterious, supernatural germination: each day the spirit of heroism grew stronger and purer in his soul. The enthusiasm of his youth made him dream of ever more daring exploits, of ever more sublime sacrifices. He was in the full grip of these exalting sentiments when he heard the news of the Iroquois invasion. Around him everyone was wondering how to dispel the terrible threat. The time of half-measures and half-sacrifices was past. Now was the decisive moment. The men at Ville-Marie, far-flung sentries, soldiers at the foremost front, had no right to hesitate. They had to strike boldly to stop the invader, or lie down to die amid the ruins of their colony.

During his tour of inspection around the Fort at night, when the danger was always greatest, the young Dollard no doubt meditated over this tragic alternative. As a leader he had to set an example; more than others he was obliged

to give of his own person: and he fully understood the extent of a soldier's sacrifice. But was it worth it — this embryonic colony, this nation still at its very beginnings — was it worth such a holocaust? And Dollard listened to the murmur of nature, the unbounded nature that surrounded him. Beyond the bastions of Pointe-à-Callières he could hear the solemn crash of the Saint-Louis Falls and the rustling of the virgin forest. What appealed to the hero was the mysterious, throbbing life of a world still latent. Beyond the mountain that hid the setting sun every evening, the young man scanned in his mind the immensity of this country waiting to be awakened from its sleep. Father still, past the 'fresh water seas', there arose above the smouldering ruins of devastated Indian villages the ghosts of the martyrs. They too called out the hero. He could hear them saying: 'Come, child of our race and faith; here we lie down that others might live. Come, in blood are prayer and redemption: ever since Calvary this rosy dew has been the essential source of all great futures.' Then the young man turned inward once more, and heard the voice of his soul, the soul of a volunteer for the Holy Virgin, a soul inhabited in his daily communions by Christ, the sublime recruiter of sacrifice. Dollard's dream came to an end, his martyr's determination firmly established. From the depths of his soul and from the heart of the great virgin forest an urgent, mingled voiced arose, crying out to him: 'Go, young commander of Ville-Marie, be the hero of our delivery, if necessary, its martyr.'

He needed companions: he started to recruit them. He had only to show himself and to speak in order to gain followers. Sixteen heroes volunteered. So as to be free to give their lives, some of them made their wills and gave away their goods. Then, one morning in April 1660, in the humble chapel of the Hôtel-Dieu, a vigil of arms came to an end. The sixteen, with Dollard as their leader, attended their last mass, received communion, and left.

They had hardly left the shore when a first misfortune befell them. Three of their number were killed in an ambush. They returned to Ville-Marie. Very simply they buried their dead; new recruits filled the vacancies; and the company of heroes set off again on their way to sacrifice.

Their plan was a very simple one. A large number of Iroquois who had spent the winter hunting north of the Ottawa would soon be returning along this route. Their plan was to

go out, meet the invaders, block their way for a time, and inflict such staggering losses on them that the enemy would be terror-stricken and turn back. You know how they carried out this plan. On the first of May they were at the foot of the Long Sault. The invaders arrived. Three hundred Iroquois decided that their number was not great enough to do battle with the pious defenders of the little fort. In all haste messengers were dispatched to the Richelieu Islands to summon the advance guard of the invading forces gathering there. Soon there were eight hundred barbarians attacking the Frenchmen's palisades. The siege lasted eight days. The besieged fought and prayed; a few Hurons came to their help only to betray them later. During the last supreme assault, the Frenchmen fought with both hands, with swords and pistols, 'a sword in the right hand and a knife in the left', as Dollier de Casson tells us. Dollard was one of the last to succumb, and after his death the three or four survivors kept to the end, like their leader and like all sixteen, the heroic resolve to ask no quarter.

You know the rest. At the end of the struggle the Iroquois counted their dead. They were filled with stupefaction. Horrified, they said to themselves, according to the report of the deserting Hurons: 'If seventeen Frenchmen, with a miserable hut found by chance as their only defence, have managed to kill so many of our warriors, how should we fare if we went to attack men of such courage when they were gathered in stone houses fortified especially for their defence? It would be pure folly: we should all perish. Therefore, let us withdraw and make our way back to our villages.'

The colony was saved. There was astonishment in Québec. Everyone wondered what had happened to the army of invaders. Meanwhile, on the wild shores of the Ottawa, the wind scattered the ashes of their saviours, and with the thunder of Long Sault was mingled the hymn of a new epic.

'We must give glory,' the Relation said soon afterward, 'to those seventeen Frenchmen of Montreal, and honour their ashes with the praise that is their just due... Everyone would have been lost had they not perished: their tragedy saved the country.'

### *Codes, Permutations and Mediations*

Let us concentrate upon this version of the Long Sault battle and attempt to reveal the central components of its mythological

structure. The legend of Dollard Des Ormeaux displays the intertwining of facts and events of various orders. There is, firstly, the residential, territorial and physical geography of New France, as well as references to a cosmographical space (e.g., heaven and earth). Secondly, the economic life of North American Indians and of New France, and — within the colony — the seasonal alternation of sedentary agriculture in the summer and nomadic hunting, trapping and fur-trading in the winter. Thirdly, the political plane which governs the relations of power, authority and allegiance between individuals or groups. Fourthly, the level of religious events (e.g., life and death), gestures and communications between men, ghosts and deities. Moreover, the latter codes are all subject to a threefold periodization of events: i.e., the critical prologue (paragraphs 1 to 5), the intermediary Ville-Marie episode (para. 6 to 12), and the Long Sault epilogue (para. 13 to 16).

*Geographic and Cosmographic Codes*

The spatial scheme is composed of two sets of elements: one horizontal and the other vertical. On the horizontal plane, the hero goes from East (downstream) to West (upstream), or from France (past the 'salt water sea') to New France, and from Ville-Marie to Ottawa River, after encountering some difficulties at St. Paul Island. He then returns from West to East (Québec city), but only partially and in the form of 'dispersed ashes'. Conversely, dispersed Iroquois bands initially engage in eastward (and downstream) military expeditions, pursuing their victims as far as the Ile d'Orléans, only to return in the later portion of the narrative to their upstream villages (past the 'fresh water seas'), following a brief and disastrous journey to the Richelieu Islands and the Long Sault.

A vertical rapport between levels thought of respectively as 'above' and 'below' is also established in the legend: Dollard is sent from heaven to earth, and — following his upstream venture — returns to an intermediary 'atmospheric' location ('atmospheric heaven' or 'superior atmosphere'; cf. Groulx, 1969: 200).

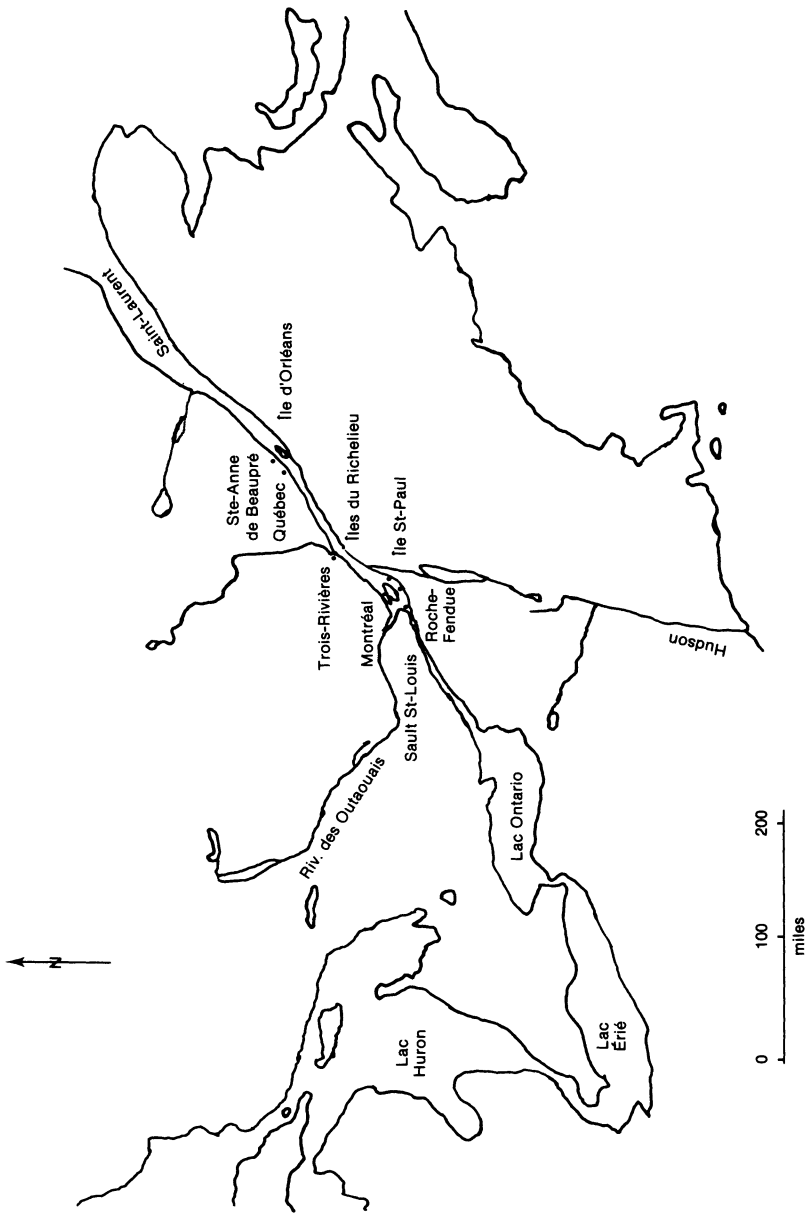
The spatial scheme thus involves, on the part of Dollard, a sequence of movements which begins with a vertical (downward) journey of maximum amplitude (from heaven to earth) and progressive east-to-west expeditions, followed by an upward voyage to a half-way atmospheric location and a partial return to the distant

settlement of Québec (where his ashes are honoured). Conversely, the Iroquois initially travel to the furthest point of their estward voyage, after which they progressively return to their cantons, i.e., their distant point of departure.

In cosmographic terms, the story starts off with the *unmediated separation* of men-of-below and deities-of-above. It ends with the *completed mediation* of the atmospheric-heaven-heroes. In between, the story depicts the beginnings of a *fragile mediatory process:* Dollard is sent from heaven, he is close to earthly saints, his soul and mind are inhabited by Christ and the voices of the martyrs' ghosts, respectively; yet he has still the form of an earthly being, he resides on earth and is subject to the hesitations and misfortunes of earthly mortals.

The mediatory functions of this legend also permeate the variations of residential patterns contained in the narrative. In the prologue, the confrontation of nomadism and sedentarism is asserted twice. Firstly, a contrast is established between the unrestricted mobility of the invading Iroquois and the 'paralysis' of life in the colony: small Iroquois bands spread throughout the colony's lands, trade routes are blocked, New France is paralysed by a savage terror, and France 'does not move' in spite of all. Secondly, New France is incapable of bringing together the customary forms of sedentary and nomadic lifestyles: although 'paralysed', settlers of New France are forced to abandon their homes (they are kidnapped and compelled to take fugitive actions), and although forced to be mobile, they cannot pursue their customary trading journeys.

The narrative then gives way, in the Ville-Marie episode, to the reduced mobility of the Iroquois who must retreat, for strategic reasons (a war-preparing assembly), to La Roche-Fendue and the Richelieu Islands (where the advance guard is gathering). Conversely, the combination of forced paralysis and forced mobility which afflicts New France in the beginning is replaced by a voluntary advance to the upstream settlement of Ville-Marie. However, this is only a *partial mobilization* and a *fragile reconciliation* of sedentarism and nomadism. Ville-Marie is referred to as the 'western outpost' and 'foremost front' of the colony; it is a half-way settlement located at the frontier of New France and the Iroquois territory. Ville-Marie soldiers are not therefore truly nomadic, fo they do not leave the confines of a settlement which does not lie entirely outside the




NEW FRANCE, 17th CENTURY

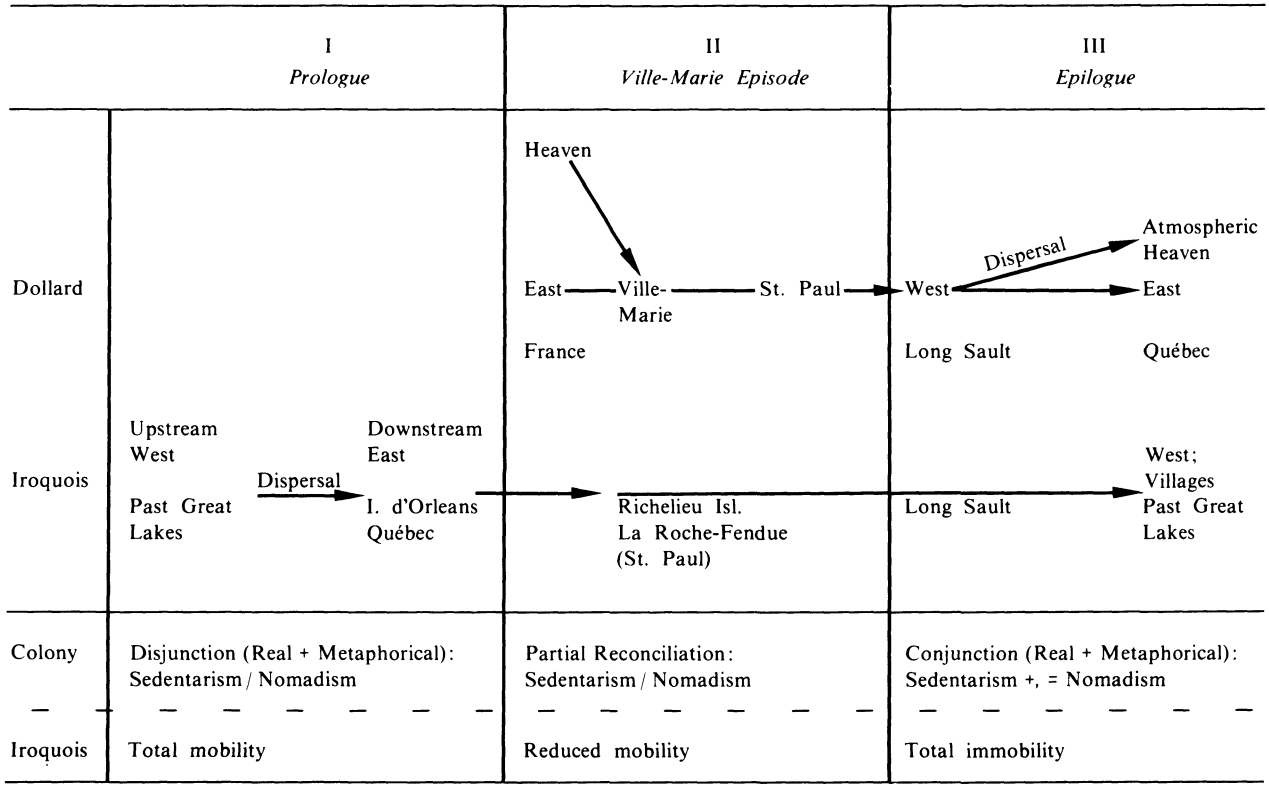
territorial boundaries of New France. Nor are they clearly committed to a sedentary lifestyle, for they are 'far-flung sentries' who have left the residential centers of New France. Futhermore, the normal pursuit of sedentary activities (such as agriculture) in Ville-Marie imposes severe limitations upon their nomadic pursuit of military achievements; similarly, sedentary activities are interrupted by the military movements of the enemy and the necessity to undertake a westward military journey.

The story ends with a complete reversal of the initial situation. The invading enemy is immobilized at the Long Sault, the advance guard of the Indian army must retreat to the Ottawa River, and all Iroquois warriors are finally compelled to take refuge in their upstream villages. As for Dollard and his men, they have left the colony and their sedentary strategy, thus regaining total mobility for themselves (their ashes are scattered by the wind) and dwellers of New France. Moreover, the epilogue suggests the effective reconciliation, in both real and metaphorical terms, of sedentary and nomadic lifestyles. New France dwellers may now resume their normal activities which involve not only the nomadic pursuit of hunting and trading expeditions, but also a return to the homes and settlements which they had initially abandoned. Similarly, the heroes' ashes are scattered by the wind, yet they are praised and honoured in Québec, as if they had returned to what had been the heroes' place of residence prior to their upstream journey.

The preceding spatial schemes are summarized in the diagram given below.

*Economic and Political Codes*

The legend introduces the economic and political schemes by evoking, in the early stages of the crisis, the disruption of productive or life-securing activities (trade and agriculture), those of the colony, by savage men-hunting expeditions. This is followed by the description of Ville-Marie, a colony where agriculture and soldiering are *simultaneously* practiced by the heroes: soldiers thus 'prayed while clearing the land with their muskets always within reach.' However, this combination or reconciliation of occupational activities is somewhat fragile: firstly, agricultural operations are disrupted by Iroquois attacks and by the heroes' obligation to pursue their westward 'real hunt for human game' (Vachon, 1966: 270); and


I
Prologue
II
Ville-Marie Episode
III
Epilogue
Heaven
Dollard
East
Ville-Marie
St. Paul
West
Dispersal
Atmospheric Heaven
East
France
Long Sault
Québec
Upstream West
Downstream East
Iroquois
Dispersal
Past Great Lakes
I. d'Orleans
Québec
Richelieu Isl.
La Roche-Fendue
(St. Paul)
Long Sault
West; Villages
Past Great Lakes
Colony
Disjunction (Real + Metaphorical):
Sedentarism / Nomadism
Partial Reconciliation:
Sedentarism / Nomadism
Conjunction (Real + Metaphorical):
Sedentarism +, = Nomadism
Iroquois
Total mobility
Reduced mobility
Total immobility

secondly, the achievement of military exploits is severely restricted by the sedentary (agricultural) lifestyle of Ville-Marie inhabitants.

The Long Sault episode permits the final reconciliation of both agricultural and hunting activities in that New France dwellers may again engage in both occupations. But the final reconciliation is also metaphorical, for in the destruction of life (as in hunting) lies the condition for the reproduction of life (as in agriculture), hence the superimposition of an agricultural symbolism upon the sacrificial-hunt theme: martyrs 'lie down that others might live', in the same way that the 'grain dying in earth generates a new and infinite vitality...' The 'fecundity of sacrifice' thus 'greatly transcends the life of the sacrificed' whenever it is 'infused with divine ferment' (Groulx, 1969: 199). The symbolic transformation of the deceased saviours into 'ashes' is well suited to the paradoxical reunification of life and death producing practices: ashes may be, as they are in this case, the residues of a destroyed life, but they can also be seen as the residues of an agricultural land-clearing operation (or of a food-preparing activity, i.e., cooking), and therefore as functionally related to the production of food and the reproduction of life.

On the political plane, the first episode describes the hunter/hunted rapport which marks the antagonism between the Iroquois and dwellers of the colony (and their allies), respectively. The Ville-Marie episode depicts the same polarization of roles (Iroquois warriors are attacking the Mont-Royal garrison and are preparing a massive invasion of the colony), but in a reduced form: indeed the Iroquois are retreating to the Richelieu Islands and La Roche-Fendue (for a war-preparing assembly), while the colony engages in a military advance towards the enemy (Dollard joins the western outpost of Ville-Marie).

The last episode involves a partial reversal of the initial situation. Like successful hunters, Dollard and his men initiate the attack, block their victims' way, inflict staggering losses on them, and force the enemy to retreat to his cantons. However, like hunted preys, the heroes are trapped (in a mockery of a fort) and killed. The expedition thus terminates with the heroes's partial defeat (in death), and with the establishment of a paradoxical equilibrium between antagonistic forces, both of which are simultaneously in the positions of hunter and hunted.

In short, the legend begins with the domination of New France by the Iroquois, and with the disruption of agriculture by men-hunting expeditions. It ends with a military equilibrium, the survival of New France, and the reconciliation — metaphorical and real — of hunting and farming activities by means of a 'fertile sacrificial hunt'. In between, the narrative describes a partial and fragile combination of hunting and farming, and an attenuated polarization of military roles (hunter / hunted, pursuing / retreating).

| *Prologue* | *Ville-Marie Episode* | *Epilogue* |
|---|---|---|
| Disjunction<br>Hunting / Agriculture | Partial Conjunction<br>Hunting — Agricultural | Conjunction<br>Hunting +, = Agriculture |
| Polarized positions:<br>Hunting Iroquois vs.<br>Hunted Colony | Attenuated polarization<br>of hunter / hunted<br>positions | Equilibrium of military<br>positions<br>(Both as hunted hunters) |

*Religious Code*

This brings us finally to the religious themes the codification of which is again subject to the threefold periodization of the Long Sault event.

Death is a constant theme in this legend, yet it lends itself to meaningful variations. In the earlier portion of the narrative, life is invariably destroyed through a horrific process of bodily dislocation: victims are either scalped or thrown into naturally or culturally alien habitats ('fire' and 'distant villages', respectively). But as the story draws to its close, death takes on a glorious character, hence the implicit resemblance which lies between the saviours' ashes and the Eucharistic species: in both cases, the deceased saviours are transformed into non-human substances (ashes and the consecrated bread and wine) and they rise to heaven (atmospheric or celestial). As in other schemes, the intermediary episode serves to establish a logical transition between the initial and concluding situations. The Ville-Marie episode thus centers on deaths which, although not horrific, do not yet result in the glorious processes of transubstantiation and ascension: life expires in simplicity (ambushed heroes are simply

buried) or with ambiguity (martyrs 'lie down' in distant villages, but their ghosts rise above earth...).

The preceding permutations lead to the final glorification of death, but they also generate the fateful resolution of the fundamental life / death contradiction: indeed the epilogue clearly suggests that death may be but a prelude to a 'transformed' life which permits the individual to 'rise' from the dead or from the land of earthly mortals (cf. Groulx, 1969: 201). Correspondingly, the threat of total destruction which initially afflicts the colony is gradually replaced by the vision of hope (or the 'throbbing life of a world still latent', the future of an 'embryonic colony'), and then, in the epilogue, by the generation of a 'new and infinite vitality'.

Yet a 'new life' cannot be engendered through any form of death: quite paradoxically, it must be a sacrificial one, or one which requires the voluntary renunciation and offering of life itself. And it is only in the concluding episode that such conditions are met: Dollard and his men finally decide to leave their defensive strategy and their protective fortifications, and to undertake — quite knowingly and willingly — their westward journey towards *full sacrifice*. Earlier responses to death are of a different nature. In the intermediary episode, soldiers tend to expose themselves too much and are in 'constant expectation of death': nevertheless, they are still at the stage of 'half-measures and half-sacrifices', for they have not yet abandoned their half-exposure strategy. Also the victims mentioned at this stage (ambushed heroes and martyrs) lose their lives unexpectedly. As for the introductory paragraphs, the imminence of a massacre is met not only with panick and fear, but also with various attempts at minimizing the victims' exposure to further killings (all take refuge).

The Iroquois' attitudes and degree of vulnerability to death are subjected to similar transformations, but in an inversed direction. In the beginning, it is the Indian warrior whose survival is scarcely threatened and who defies death by exposing himself to the firing of the French cannons. Conversely, by the end of the story, the barbarian enemy is the one who suffers many losses and who decides not to expose himself to the threat of total destruction, thus withdrawing into his own territorial refuge.

The religious aspects of this legend center upon the notion of sacrifice. The securing and regeneration of a new life is conditioned

by the sacrificial offering of a mediator's life: as a cosmological in-between and go-between, Dollard is indeed well qualified to play the role of mediator between

i. men's initial call (through ritual extroversion, i.e., processions) upon God's life-securing protection;

ii. and the deities' subsequent call (through human introversion, i.e., Dollard's 'inward vision') upon men's sacrificial renunciation of life.

Let us now examine this legend in the light of an additional theme which may at first appear quite irrelevant to the issues discussed above: i.e., food. In this myth, the initial state of affairs is characterized by the dominance, in the relations between men, of the hunter / hunted rapport, and the ensuing threat to the colony's pursuit of food-producing activities (trade and agriculture). Like hunted animals, men are trapped, killed, displayed as trophies, skinned (scalped), taken away from their habitat, and even burned — as if the human body could be treated as meat. Conversely, the intermediary Ville-Marie episode expresses the dominance of an agricultural-like rapport, as applied to the relations which God entertains with men: through Eucharistic rituals, God is thus giving his own Body to men, in the form of Holy Food (bread and wine), hence the 'infusion' of a 'divine ferment' which makes possible the 'supernatural germination' and 'growth' of the 'spirit of heroism' in men's souls. The final state of affairs depends again upon the dominance of an agricultural-like rapport, but this time in extension to the relations that men entertain between themselves: human life is here willingly sacrificed in order to 'generate a new and infinite vitality' and to secure the survival of other men, hence the metaphorical transformation of the human body into a food-producing 'grain dying in earth', or into residues of food-producing fires (ashes of cooking or land-clearing fires).

To sum up, the religious scheme consists of various correlating permutations which involve the gradual transition

i. from horrific deaths by dislocation to glorious deaths by transubstantiation and ascension;

ii. from the settlers' vision and fear of total destruction to the heroes' fearless sacrifice of life and the ensuing vision of a new life and an infinite vitality;

iii. from the defiant actions of the fearless Iroquois to the fugitive measures to which they resort when confronted with the threat of total destruction;

iv. from men's unanswered call for God's life-securing protection and God's unanswered call for men's life-renouncing sacrifice, to the effective answering of both calls;

v. and from the dominance of a hunt-like rapport between men to the dominance of an agricultural-like rapport in the relations which men entertain with God and between themselves.

*Message and Meaning*

The legend can be reduced to the following paradox: Dollard has reconquered food (or the life-reproduction process) and his freedom of movement, but at the cost of his own life. Famine, forced immobility (or forced expatriation) and subjection to persecution should be responded to by fear of death and the non-acceptance of such calamities; yet repletion, freedom of movement and political strength can be gained only through the sacrificial renunciation of life itself.

## 3. POVERTY, SACRIFICE AND PROGRESS

In the legend of Dollard, it is the affirmation of a heroic consent to die which secures the (agricultural-like) regeneration of life and political strength in the colony, and with it, the maintenance of a political equilibrium between New France and its barbarian enemies. The legend thus expresses some of the central values of traditional French Canada, or the maintenance of political and cultural autonomy and the faithful practice of Catholicism and an agricultural mode of life. But more importantly, it reveals a fundamental aspect of this Society's dominant conception of History and of its relative position in the Western World. On the basis of an elaborate codification of the Christian notion of 'sacrifice', French Canada has chosen to assert its relative superiority in philosophical and spiritual matters, while acknowledging the superiority of its neighbours in the domain of business and worldly achievements. In the words of Henri Bourassa, French Canadians cannot compete with their Anglo-Saxon neighbours 'on ground — that of business — where they will always be our superiors'; the priestly elite must therefore denounce the evils of

materialism, and 'set against this the example of self-sacrifice, intellectual liveliness, simplicity of habits...' (Bourassa, 1969: 125-7; see also Groulx, 1969: 197)

Statements of the latter sort have often been construed as expressing French Canada's explicit ideological rejection of all forms of progress. This interpretation is quite misleading and tends to oversimplify the nature of the messages conveyed in the conservative ideology. The intellectual elites of French Canada did not reject the notion of Progress; on the contrary, they posited the desirability of advances in all areas of reality, or in the material, intellectual and spiritual spheres of human life. The particularity of the 'French Canadian outlook' rested not upon a negative or indifferent attitude towards the 'Forward March of History', but rather upon a favourable disposition towards the supremacy of the spiritual and moral schemes of Progress, in relation to other desirable achievements, and upon the valuation of sacrificial gestures, material and ritual, as means to spiritual betterment.

This brings us to the values of worldly asceticism in the context of Christian ethics and the development of the Capitalist ethos. In his influential study on 'the relationship between religion and the economic and social life in modern culture', Max Weber distinguishes between the Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism, and defines the latter as involving 'the pursuit of profit, and forever renewed profit, by means of continuous, rational capitalistic entreprise' (Weber, 1958: 17). By the Capitalist Ethos is therefore meant an 'attitude which seeks profit rationally and systematically...' (p. 64). As for the Protestant ethic, it rests upon a 'systematic self-control which at every moment stands before the inexorable alternative, chosen or damned' (p. 115), and thus upon an ascetic type of conduct which serves to increase the Glory of God. (p. 114)

Although distinct, the two rationalities — Protestant and Capitalist — could and did initially reinforce one another in that the former objected systematically to 'relaxation in the security of possession', 'waste of time', and unwillingness to work for the divine glory. Protestant asceticism had thus the psychological effect of liberating the pursuit of profit from the restrictions and inhibitions of 'traditionalistic' ethics:

> It broke the bonds of the impulse of acquisition in that it not only legalized it, but (in the sense discussed) looked upon it as directly willed by God (...) The

> religious valuation of restless, continuous, systematic work in a worldly calling, as the highest means to asceticism, and at the same time the surest and most evident proof of rebirth and genuine faith, must have been the most powerful conceivable lever for the expression of that attitude toward life which we have here called the spirit of capitalism. When the limitation of consumption is combined with the release of acquisitive activity, the inevitable practical result is obvious: accumulation of capital through ascetic compulsion to save. (Weber, 1958: 171-2; see also pp. 91, 121, 154)

The preceding observations are highly relevant to our understanding of the so-called traditionalism of French Canadian Society. One of the most striking features of conservative ideologies and mythologies in French Canada is that they have tackled the same problematic issue as the one discussed above: i.e., the relationship between religious asceticism and the cumulation of economic wealth (and — we may add — knowledge and power). Moreover, the ensuing cultural strategy consisted certainly not in the radical negation of worldly achievements, but rather in the negation, as in Puritan Protestantism, of the intentional supremacy of such worldly goals, or the negation of all systems of values which accord priority to the methodical growth of wealth, power and knowledge as ends in themselves. Groulx's narrative and discussion of the Long Sault battle contain a good illustration of this puritan vision of ascetic conduct in all spheres of human activity:

i. Men are encouraged to 'assume the formidable authority of leadership', yet they must do so by means of an 'ascetic effort': 'after all, the elite is an elite only in order to devote itself. Its reputation and dignity derive solely from the nobility of that which it sacrifices.' (Groulx, 1969: 195, cf. 198)

ii. The same rules of conduct should regulate the acquisition of knowledge itself in that men are required to impose 'a kind of intellectual asceticism upon themselves', for 'at the root of every fruitful action there lies, indispensably, and ascetic effort.' (Groulx, 1969: 198)

iii. The acquisition of material wealth is also subject to a disciplined lifestyle, and ideally, as in the case of Dollard and dwellers of New France, to the arduous 'epic of the plough'. Moreover, the returns of self-arduous actions must serve not the satisfaction of personal interests, but more importantly, the Will of God and the exigencies of Christian Charity:

> Just as, on the material level, wealth acquires through Divine Will a kind of social destiny, so, on the spiritual level, there must be a part set aside for the poor. No one is given intelligence or generosity for himself alone: those who are wealthy in their mind or heart must administer their superfluity for the profit of God and country. 'Whoever has received from Divine Providence a greater abundance either of exterior, bodily goods or of spiritual goods,' Leo XIII teaches, 'has received them for the purpose of perfecting himself, and, as an agent of Providence, relieving others.' (Groulx, 1969: 195)

Weber claims that religious account-books in Catholicism served the purpose of completeness of confession, while the Reformed Christian extended this rational systematization of ethical conduct to all the details of life (1958: 123-4; cf. 115-6). The lesson which Groulx derives from the legend of Dollard (and which permeates the legend itself) suggests, on the contrary, that Catholicism may lend itself to a thorough, methodical and business-like Christianization of all schemes of conduct, such that all worldly successes are conditional upon the calculated realization, within worldly occupations, of a sacrificial mode of life. If Dollard were alive, he would tell his companions that if they do want results and are unwilling to lose, through their own fault or some voluntary 'deficit', 'even the smallest part of the returns' from their action, they must then first have the loyalty to give this sacrificial effort 'all the conditions of power.' Dollard does also calculate the worth of his sacrifice which leads him to conclude that 'the fecundity of sacrifice greatly transcends the life of the sacrificed.' (Groulx, 1969: 199; see also p. 198)

Weber recognizes at one point that 'in spite of the greater ethical moderation of Catholicism, an ethically unsystematic life did not satisfy the highest ideals which it had set up even for the life of the layman' (1958:120). French Canada, we might add, illustrates well this sort of Society where Catholicism had not restricted the methodical life to monastic cells. However, Weber suggests that the Catholic ethos did counteract in various ways the motivational propensity towards rational achievement in this world. Unlike Calvinism, Catholicism did not value the fulfilment of duty in organized worldly labour as the surest sign of one's faith and eternal salvation, the highest form of the moral activity, and the best means for the achievement of the common good. On the contrary: The 'holiest task' for Catholicism is 'definitely to surpass all worldly morality', hence the glorification of poverty, charitable deeds and ritual practices (sacraments and indulgences) as effective *means of*

*salvation.* (Weber, 1958: 73-6, 80-3, 105-6, 108-9, 112-3, 116-7, 120-1, 137, 159, 161-3, 177, 248)

Weber's characterization of the Catholic ethos corresponds to the traditional values of French Canada and to most of the themes developed in the story of Dollard: sacraments are constantly resorted to as means to secure protection, spiritual strength and grace, and the practice of Charity and self-sacrifice obliges the heroes to give away their goods and to abandon their normal labour or agricultural life-work. One might, therefore, be tempted to conclude, as Weber does, that this sort of Catholic asceticism tends to drive the heroic individual further away from everyday life and 'all worldly morality'. Yet some important qualifications and objections should be brought to the latter conclusion.

i. The practice of charitable deeds is seen by Weber as a restriction upon the 'ascetic compulsion to save' (p. 171-2), but it can also be regarded as an effective (religious) incentive to the methodical accumulation of wealth as a necessary condition for its *partial* redistribution through the 'bonnes œuvres'. More generally, the institutionalization of any religious mechanism of humanitarian redistribution within (early or late) Capitalist Society can in fact serve to legitimize what it presupposes, that is the unequal distribution of wealth and power.

   Furthermore, the altruistic practice of Charity was often viewed, in the eyes of Catholic bishops, priests and laymen, as compatible with the entrepreneurial pursuit of material profit, for the creation of greater wealth could be motivated by the altruistic promotion of the 'common good'. This motivational sanctioning of business activities did in fact facilitate, as pointed out by William Ryan (1966: 80, 84, 159), those intimate relations which used to prevail between industrialists and the Church in the early years of this century.

   As in Puritan Protestantism, wealth (and power) is 'bad ethically only in so far as it is a temptation to idleness and sinful enjoyment of life.' But as a means to the performance of duty, the practice of Charity and the pursuit of the common good, 'it is not only morally permissible, but actually enjoined.' (Weber, 1958: 163, cf. 172)

ii. According to Weber, Catholicism's positive valuation of poverty and sacraments as effective means of redemption tends to detract

men from their worldly tasks. Yet it can be argued that the glorification of 'the loyal worker who did not seek acquisition, but lived according to the apostolic model,' simply represented a convenient way of offering greater returns upon the sort of asceticism experienced among the propertyless classes (Weber, 1958: 178, cf. 139, 281). It should be remembered that Calvinist Puritans viewed wealth — or the success of a labour in a calling — as a privileged sign of election or divine blessing, and argued that the wish to be poor has much in common with the wish to be unhealthy: they are both derogatory to the glory of God (Weber, 1958: 133, 163). Calvinism, in this sense, was better suited to the active and successful entreprise of bourgeois-capitalist entrepreneurs, but offered little compensation for those who had less success in their 'good works'. In contrast, Catholicism — and some branches of Baptism and Pietism — had more to offer to those whose 'life offers no other opportunities' and whose 'faithful labour, even at low wages, is highly pleasing to God' (Weber, 1958: 178). The religious sanctioning of poverty was also reinforced, in Catholicism, by a greater emphasis upon the performance of sacramental rituals and the corresponding replacement of rules of wealth accumulation by methodical rules of worldly mortification and spiritual fortification.

To conclude, French Canadian Catholicism differed from the 'Protestant Ethic' (as defined by Weber) in that it remained ambivalent towards worldly achievements: it oscillated not between a negative and an indifferent attitude towards wealth accumulation, but rather between a positive valuation of the religiously motivated quest for wealth, and an equally positive assessment of poverty and ritualized sacrifices as means of spiritual betterment. The 'conservative outlook' which resulted had nothing to do with the so-called preservation of a 'folk' culture or of quasi-feudal ethics, and corresponded to one possible variation upon the articulation of the Modern schemes of Christian asceticism and economic progress. Puritan Calvinism and Protestantism are perhaps, in certain contexts, better suited to the religious codification of the dominant value-orientations of capitalists themselves, yet Catholicism may offer, on the basis of a different arrangement of similar themes, an equally powerful set of symbolic tools for the ideological legitimization of inequalities in Capitalist Society. The 'conservative' version of Catholicism was especially well suited to the effective resolution, on

the symbolic plane, of those social and economic contradictions which confronted French Canadian Society. Not only did it contribute to hide the polarization of class interests under a thick cloak of Christian harmony between the workman and his patron, or the hard-working, easily-contended labourer and his devoted 'benefactor' (Ryan, 1966: 80). But it also enabled French Canada's dominant elite of petty-bourgeois priests, politicians and professionals (doctors, lawyers, notaries, teachers), or the pillars of the 'traditional outlook', to sublimate its own contradictory and mediatory situation in worldly matters. Much like its own people the poverty of which it glorified, this 'noble aristocracy' was deprived of any significant control over the major levers of economic power; yet, not unlike those wealthier entrepreneurs whose ascetic devotion they lauded, this elite did indeed assume a powerful role in the daily lives of ordinary men...

## 4. PRACTICES OF AN INVERTED WORLD

In the preceding discussion, I have objected to the misuse of anthropology's evolutionary discourse and to the erroneous characterization of French Canada's ultra-conservatism as an illustration of a non-modern commitment to the Supremacy of Tradition. Cultural differences and economic disparities within Western Societies must surely be accounted for, but the latter 'modernization' discourse offers a misleading solution in that it rests upon an abuse of identification of non-modern Traditions with the 'conservative' traditions of some modern men. Yet I hasten to add that Anthropology has much to offer from the point of view of our understanding of cultural practices in Modern Society: an in-depth structural examination of those coded messages which legends transmit may for instance shed some light on the possible uses of mythological channels in the effective communication of dominant ideological themes.

There is another level at which the findings of anthropology may contribute to our comprehension of communicational exchanges in Modern Society: i.e., the cross-cultural analysis of symbolic practices as they relate to varying forms of social organizations. Consider again the legend of Dollard, the contents of which make sense as one possible codification of themes which are to be found in many different societies. In Groulx's narrative, there are various symbolic

schemes which resemble in several respects those which are brought into play in non-Western mythologies, such as the well-known story of Asdiwal, a native myth from the Pacific Coast of Canada. Thus, in both legends, it is famine (or a threat to survival), at a critical moment of the year (late winter or early spring), which sets an earth-born saviour in a westward journey away from home. Asdiwal and Dollard are both bringers of food and successful hunters who end up trapped half-way between spatial terms thought of respectively as 'above' and 'below' (peak / valley, heaven / earth). More generally, they are both given the arduous and perilous task of mediating between a complex series of interrelated oppositions: i.e., spatial (high / low, heaven / earth, east / west, downstream / upstream), residential (patrilocal / matrilocal; or nomadic / sedentary), economic (sea-hunting / mountain-hunting; or hunting / agriculture), and socio-political (patrilineage vs. matrilineage; or Iroquois vs. French).

However, for reasons which are by no means accidental, Dollard succeeds in accomplishing his mediatory mission, while Asdiwal does not. Because he forgot his powerful hunting tools (snow-shoes), Asdiwal is changed to stone on the spot, that is to say paralysed, reduced to his earth-born nature in the stony and unchangeable form in which he has been seen for generations (Lévi-Strauss, 1968: 17). At the end of a successful hunt, he has reconquered food, but at the price of paralysis. Dollard's fate is quite the opposite: he willingly gives up his own military hunt-like 'instruments' (military fortifications) and is soon transformed, after a successful hunt-for-men, into 'scattered ashes', thus abandoning his human life and earth-born nature. Dollard, unlike the Tsimshian hero, reconquers not only food and survival for his fellowmen, but also total mobility and eternal spiritual life for himself.

The structural contrasts which lie between the two myths correspond to real contrasts in social structures. As argued by Lévi-Strauss, the story of Asdiwal portrays a fundamental aspect of the social organization of the Tsimshian people, which consists in a hostile equilibrium between the matrilineages of the village chiefs. These feudal families were, so to speak, ranged around a more or less stable marriage circle, in such a way that each family occupied the position of 'superior wife-giver' with respect to some other family and of 'inferior wife-taker' with respect to a third: hence the possible maintenance of a relative equilibrium within such exchanges. The

societies of the Northwest Pacific Coast could not, however, accept the ethics of social egalitarianism with the result that each marriage served as an occasion to openly contest the relative superiority or inferiority of the groups involved. As shown by Lévi-Strauss, the story of Asdiwal expresses in its own 'concrete' way all those paradoxes which correlate with the latter antagonism. But the legend, much like the marriage system itself, fails to resolve this 'less obvious yet so real paradox'. Furthermore, the 'failure is admitted in our myths, and there precisely lies their functions' (Lévi-Strauss, 1968: 28). Mythological speculations, in the last analysis, 'do not depict what is real, but to justify the shortcomings of reality, since the extreme positions are only imagined in order to show that they are untenable.' (Lévi-Strauss, 1968: 30)

The preceding comment would also apply to the mythical conception of the relationship between men and food as expressed in Tsimshian mythology. The story starts with the absence of food, and the role of the hero, as *bringer of food,* consists in a negation of this absence:

> but that is quite another thing (from saying that Asdiwal's role equates with) the presence of food. In fact, when this presence is finally obtained, with Asdiwal taking on the aspect of 'food itself' (and no longer that of 'bringer of food'), the result is a state of inertia. (Lévi-Strauss, 1968: 32)

In brief, the negation of an inverted world would seem to be the only positive form of existence which may be conceived in this native mythology.

Let us glance at the sociological functions of the story of Dollard in this light, and in relation to the glorification of other-worldly values in French Canada. One of the most critical problems with which this society has been (and is still) confronted, resided in the conspicuous position of inferiority which it occupied in economic matters. The mythical and religious 'speculations' in which French Canada indulged for so long meant not the preservation of a retrograde obsession with Tradition, but rather a mythical attempt at achieving a certain equilibrium of forces — more apparent, however, than real. Given the social and economic context which prevailed, French Canadian elites simply chose to assert the dominance of an Inverted World. The Tsimshian sought to justify the antagonisms and shortcomings of reality by showing how untenable Non-Reality would be. French Canadians had little choice but to view their own

reality as untenable, and to assert the supremacy of the religious scheme and their absolute superiority in spiritual matters. Correspondingly, the legend of Dollard did not admit the failure to resolve real contradictions; rather, it proclaimed the triumph of its own 'imaginaire religieux' over the brutal forces of material power in the daily lives of men.

The imagined relationship between men and food in the story of Dollard reflects quite well the mythical mind's effort to negate the insurmountability of those contradictions which exist in social reality. In Groulx's narrative of the Long Sault battle, disaster awaits those who identify man with food, or the Iroquois who treat the bodies of their human victims as if it were real food; for this reason, they are condemned, like Asdiwal, to immobility (or forced retreat to their cantons). However, Dollard is guilty of an attenuated abuse of identification, for his role equates with the presence of food-residues from which food may be reproduced (ashes and 'grain dying in earth'). Unlike other martyrs, Dollard's body is not treated as food-for-cannibals, and unlike God's Eucharistic species, it cannot serve as food for the souls of men; but when his body is fed to earth, as a grain dying in earth, life is effectively regenerated and a 'new infinite vitality' is engendered. The Tsimshian character who identified food with men committed the crime of inverting the facts of Reality, and was thus transformed into an immobile rock, while those who ate food (as normal men do) were reborn from the burning of their carefully collected bones. But Dollard, as the triumphant hero who carries out the project of a World Inversion, is rewarded for the feeding of his body to earth and for the fertile sacrifice of his life. Thanks to his sacrificial gesture, he reconquers life and wealth for his fellowmen, mobility and 'immortal youth' for himself, and is reborn from the scattered ashes of his (burnt) body and from the careful preservation of his 'memory'. (Groulx, 1969: 201)

## 5. THE DEMYSTIFICATION OF A HERO

As mentioned earlier, French Canada's Quiet Revolution has led to the recent rewriting of its own Past and to the reinterpretation of the Long Sault battle on the basis of a 'more realistic' code, one which avoids the naiveties of an 'upside down World'. This new thesis claims that Dollard's expedition to the Long Sault was above

all economic in nature: it consisted essentially in the calculated pursuit of material gains, i.e., valuable stocks of furs, the outcome of which was affected by

i. the limited availability of relevant information, such as the Iroquois plan to invade the colony;

ii. some military miscalculations (such as the unfortunate decisions to break the truce before the parley with the enemy had failed, and to refrain from ordering a sortie at one point during the battle);

iii. and the conjunction of other circumstances (such as the 'blind' decision fo the Iroquois to abandon their invasion plan). As for the religious aspects of the event, they are simply seen as reflecting the egocentric pursuit of secondary (psychological) ends through ritual means: men thus fulfilled their religious obligations (all made their wills, confessed, and received holy communion) because they would not go off 'without taking this precaution...', and the act of taking an oath of fidelity ('they agreed under no circumstance to ask for mercy') corresponded merely to a verbal contract of partnership among the Seventeen. (Cf. Vachon, 1966: 269-72; Lacoursière, 1970:72)

The subordination, in the earlier thesis, of economic interests to the religious spirit of self-sacrifice thus gives way, in the more recent version, to the primacy of a Utilitarian Rationality, or the individual's calculated efforts at reaching his own worldly ends. Quite interestingly, the actions of the Iroquois enemy serve to illustrate, in each thesis, the negation of those practices or motivations which govern the behaviour of Dollard and his men. Thus, for Groulx, the Iroquois are constantly indulging in treachurous and machiavellian tactics in order to achieve their immoral worldly ambitions: the control of the fur trade and the military domination of North America (Groulx, 1960: 41-2, 52-3). And if they abandon their invasion project, it is for fear of losing their lives. Vachon depicts the Iroquois quite differently. Their presence in the northern regions of the Ottawa River is economically motivated, yet their behaviour — unlike that of the Seventeen — is partly governed by non-rational forces: indeed their final retreat is caused by their unambitious, superstitious and irrational military habits. (Vachon, 1966: 273-4)

Each version also defines the historical significance of the event under study on the basis of a particular evaluation of temporal

occurrences, one which fits the exigencies of its own interpretative code. In the conservative version, it is man's reenactment of a religious Past, or Christ's sublime sacrifice, which enables the colony to overcome its worldly difficulties and to progress in worldly matters. In the utilitarian thesis, the historical significance of the Long Sault battle resides again in the achievement of worldly progress, but by totally different means: i.e., the innovative abandonment of secular practices of the Past.

> Dollard and his companions diverted the Iroquois army temporarily from its objective in 1660, thereby allowing the settlers to harvest their crop and escape famine and allowing Radisson to reach safe and sound with a load of furs valued at 200,000 livres. The Seventeen did not die in vain. And their merit was great. They were the first to take the offensive against the Iroquois when they left populated regions to destroy the enemy bands before they could strike at the colony. This tactic was ahead of its time since, except for the expedition by the Carrignan-Salières regiment, it was not taken up until much later. (Vachon, 1966: 274)

Nonetheless the Long Sault battle loses much of its significance when subjected to this recent Utilitarian rewriting of History. Dollard ceases to be a legendary figure as soon as his actions are stripped of all religious motivations. More importantly, Dollard is entirely incapable of bringing together all the conditions of a decisive and exemplary achievement in the advance of a Utilitarian Rationality and of Liberal Progress. Although useful, the military innovation mentioned above fails to play a primary role in the evolution of French Canadian Society; moreover, Dollard's actions do not always result from well-informed and adequate calculations, nor do they result in that sort of 'happy ending' in which the compatible interests of Society and the Individual are simultaneously promoted. In short, Dollard has been 'demystified' not by Science, but rather by the new dominant Ideology with its own set of historical landmarks and its own pantheon of carefully selected idols.

## CONCLUSION: MESSIANISM AND MODERNITY

To conclude, the two counterclaiming interpretations of the Long Sault battle belong to the same 'problematic field', or the same cultural environment, one which distinguishes not only between two schemes of conduct, or the methodical pursuit of worldly values and the altruistic ethics of Christian asceticism, but also between two schemes of knowledge, or science and non-science (both theses claim

to be scientifically 'objective'; cf. Groulx, 1960: 56, 9-12; and Vachon, 1966: 268, 274)[4]. However, each thesis suggests, on the basis of its own codificatory (and ideological) commitment, an alternative articulation of these Western themes. In the more recent version, there is a systematic attempt at transmitting the (neo-) liberal ideology of 'modern' Québec (and of its new petty-bourgeoisie, cf. Monière, 1977: 365), and at asserting the 'relative autonomy' of science vis-à-vis religion, and of 'practical reason' vis-à-vis the pursuit of spiritual goals. The task of the modern historian may thus consist in salvaging the historical truth from the perils of religiously-inspired preconceptions of human knowledge and behaviour. Conversely, 'traditional' French Canada chose — for reasons which are not foreign to the particularities of its own class structure — to reject this principle 'to make the most of both worlds' (Weber, 1958: 176), and to assert the supremacy of the religious scheme in relation to worldly pursuits.

* * *

The significance of conservative and messianic ideologies in Western Societies may reside, as suggested in this essay, in their capacity to *rearrange* the ordering or articulation of those religious and economic schemes which prevail in Modern Culture. The dominance of the Religious scheme in traditional French Canada corresponded, in the final analysis, to *one possible strategy* in the management of meaningful practices in the modern context, one in which the determination in the last instance of economic intentionalities was considered as the absolute inversion of all human morality. To put it differently, Modern (or Bourgeois) Society is characterized not by the necessary dominance and determination (in the last instance) of its own mode of material production[5], but rather:

[4] Similarly, Rousseau suggests that Faillon's 'mythical' analysis of French Canadian history produces a narrative account which is structured by the conflict between two intentionalities: 'le désir du salut des hommes vs l'intérêt personnel.' He also notes the historian's effort to hide his own interpretative code behind the factual objectivity of documents and events; however, instead of situating this quest for objective truth within the context of a specific cultural commitment, that of Western Science, he relates it to one of the fundamental attributes of mythical thought itself: 'la réalité posée... manifeste la Réalité, ce qui se doit d'apparaître parce que correspondant à la structure invariable du monde, à la Pensée du monde ou à sa Volonté.' (Rousseau, 1977: 50, 54, 56)

[5] See for example Baudrillard, 1973: 54-5; Clastres, 1968: 169; Dalton, 1968: 145; Godelier, 1972: XXIX, 77, 302; Guillaume, 1975: 92; Lefebvre, 1971: 363; and Sahlins, 1976: 20, 37-9, 55-6, 211-5.

(a) by a particular structure of culturally differentiated practices (which precedes the relative 'weight', non-causal, assigned to each 'instance'; cf. Sebag, 1964: 141-2);

(b) and by the possible implementation of a hierarchical ordering of such practices, to the apparent advantage of either the economic base, the political institutions, or — given other socio-economic conditions — the religious sphere proper.

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